

Big Ten Conference Women's Basketball Tournament

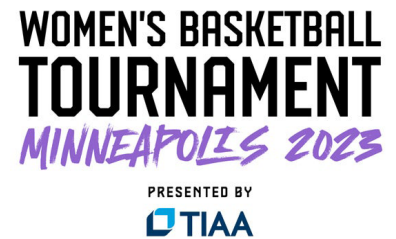
Saturday, March 4, 2023
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Target Center

Indiana Hoosiers

Teri Moren

Grace Berger

Postgame Press Conference



Ohio State - 79, Indiana - 75

TERI MOREN: Really obviously disappointed with the outcome, but let's first talk about Ohio State and how terrific they were today, particularly in the second half. We knew that they were not going to go away in the second half after the first half that we had.

So the message was to erase the score. We knew that the press was going to come out, and that's on me. It's not on these kids. We just didn't handle ourselves the way we needed to.

Maybe I should have called an earlier timeout just to make sure that they had confidence and instill composure and poise into them and give them good juice. As I said to them, that's on me. We didn't shoot the ball particularly well in the second half. That's on me.

You know, you just can't give up 19 points off of turnovers and 14 second-chance points to a team like Ohio State in the second half. The bugaboo was the press today, but we've handled it at our place. We handled it at their place. Today in the semis that wasn't a good moment for us to have to not be able to handle it.

Again, you've got to give your hats off to Ohio State. They were mad and aggressive and really stifled us and ended up obviously winning the game.

We're disappointed, but we're looking forward to what's next for this team.

Q. This has kind of been a rough week, starting with the Iowa loss, then you won yesterday but it wasn't your best effort. You lost today. Can you use that as motivation going to the NCAA Tournament to make sure you reach your goals there?

GRACE BERGER: I think it's going to sting for a couple days, but once we get practicing back this week, I think we'll use it as motivation for sure and figure out how to get better from it.

TERI MOREN: Can I just add to that? This is a team that's won 27 games. We have three hiccups. They've had a great year.

Q. Grace, you guys in your previous two matchups against Ohio State were really able to kind of capitalize on the press. What was different today that kind of led you guys to struggle against it?

GRACE BERGER: I think they did a better job of denying, getting the ball in. Then I think you have Jacy Sheldon back, and she makes a big difference. She's quick, she's athletic, she's really good. So I'd say those two things.

TERI MOREN: Just to answer your question, the press was different. So they denied the ball inbounds; that was different. They were denying the reversal pass; that was different than we had seen at their place and certainly at our place.

So their press, they did tweak it, and it was more aggressive. G's absolutely right, Jacy makes a difference because of her athleticism, because she's quick, she has great instincts, she anticipates, all of it.

As I mentioned, we got it down into the deep corners way too often. We struggled. Our inbounders Syd and Yarden struggled with making the right decisions. Again, that's on us. That's on me and our staff of not being able to help them with a better press attack. And really just calm them down a little bit.

When you have a veteran team like we do, the maturity, you just inside I have so much confidence in them that I think they're going to figure it out. With Grace and Chloe and certainly that's sort of where my mind was, like we're going to figure this thing out, especially Grace.

Like I said, give them credit. They didn't -- they amped it



up, and when you start turning it over, things change a little bit in terms of your poise. And now you're trying to make home run plays. But once we get it across the timeline, we still had opportunities. We just didn't capitalize. We missed layups. I think Sara got it blocked from behind. Sara has a great look. It doesn't go down for us.

So, again, we'll look back, and we always have to learn something from this happening. We will. I think this group, as Grace said, it's going to sting for a couple days, but I think it will help us in the NCAA Tournament. I think we're looking forward to playing somebody else, a different team that we don't get to see three times a year.

Q. Coach, can you talk about Sara's performance in the tournament. Obviously the second quarter was huge, got you up by 24, and what excites you about her play going into the NCAA Tournament?

TERI MOREN: She obviously likes the Target Center because she certainly has shot the ball well in here in front of her friends and her family, which is great. I wish the outcome would have been different because I think, if we could have gotten to the championship game, we would have all been entertained by how she's been shooting the ball. That's what I'm most excited about.

She is the piece to this puzzle. When we got her a year ago, we felt she was the missing piece that was going to be able to space the floor for us. Sure enough, she's been able to do that for us.

So I'm excited for her and her teammates as we move forward in the tournament, but certainly to know that we get to coach her for another season is also exciting.

Q. Similar to what Grace said, you've had a great year. You mentioned that you only had three losses. But how much can the motivation of today do with the NCAA Tournament? Because sometimes that's what media and fans judge you on, fair or not?

TERI MOREN: The media judges us on a lot of things. That's fair. That's what their jobs are. The kids have always had a resiliency about them. They've always had a bounce-back ability. This is not a group that likes losing. So they will use it as motivation without question.

Q. Your team's been going, going, going, winning a ton. How important is this break going to be before the NCAA tourney?

TERI MOREN: We're all a little nicked up right now. I think all of them are. Mentally we're tired. Physically I know they're tired. We do have some things health-wise that this

period will be really good for a lot of different reasons.

So I think we're all looking forward to just getting a little bit of a break here before the other madness starts.

Q. The whole season you've talked a lot about this team's ability to compose themselves and not push that panic button. Do you think their mentality switched at all in the tournament because it was higher stakes, or do you think they remained composed?

TERI MOREN: No, I don't. I think that we just -- we ran into a really competitive, physical Ohio State team in the second half, and we didn't handle ourselves very well.

I don't think the stakes changed just because of this tournament. I think we're pretty secure in where we're at and where we stand. But, again, Ohio State is a superb team, and so are the other teams in the field right now. There's a reason why this is the best conference in the country this particular year. Not every year, but this particular year.

Again, with the schedule that we have, we beat up on each other every single night. But, no, this team's never felt like -- you know, they've always sort of embraced who they are and the pressure that comes with being the hunted, right? Being the Number 1 seed. We've had to play like that throughout the whole season. Everybody is going to give us their best.

We've realized that, and we've stepped up to that challenge more so than we haven't. I'm really pleased with the way we've handled ourselves throughout the Big Ten season. We're certainly proud to be their coaches, and like I said, you can't -- they've had a great year, and we can't, because of this -- maybe Michigan State, Iowa, that was a tough one. This is certainly a tough one.

But what they've been able to accomplish in this league has been incredible, and I don't want us to forget about that.

Q. What adjustments did you try to make there late in the game against that press?

TERI MOREN: We tried to just try to create -- encourage them to create more space to catch it versus trying to catch it in the deep corner, the coffin corner. You don't want to do that.

We were trying to get our middles to be more active. We were trying to get our back line. We just -- we didn't do a very good job of getting the ball out of our hands. We've allowed the trap to come to us, and that's one of the worst

things you can do. When that press is coming, is to hold onto it too long and/or not make a quick decision perhaps to go up the sideline and try to get out of it before the trap comes.

So nothing, other than just our spacing and reminding them of the spots that they needed to fill, of the activity that we needed, those were the things that we discussed. But we still struggled.

Q. What were they doing to minimize and limit Mackenzie's touches in the post?

TERI MOREN: They went small. They started playing small. Obviously Becca played a few minutes, and she hurt us on a couple of threes that she hit. You saw Cotie McMahon try to front her from time to time.

Mack wasn't 100 percent today. I think you could tell by the way she was getting up and down the floor that wasn't a healthy Mack, Mackenzie Holmes out there today. We knew they were going to full front. We knew they were going to be physical with her. They understand that she's a big part of what we do offensively. Kevin's a great coach, has a great staff, and they tried to take, obviously, her away from us as much as they could.

So that limited our ability to get the ball into her.

Q. You mentioned that Mack not being 100 percent today. When you said there are ten days off for health, I'm assuming she was one of the main people you were talking about. How much do you think those ten days off will help her get much closer to what she is?

TERI MOREN: It's all of them. It's not just Mackenzie. Those are things that always stay in our program. They all need a break. Coach Moren needs a break. Thank you very much.

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